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## Prehistoric Life on the Mississippi Floodplain: Stone Tool Use, Settlement Organization, and Subsistence Practices at the Labras Lake Site, Illinois

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transportation (H. Roger Grant) are traditional topics that receive a thorough discussion while the essays on agriculture and livestock production (James W. Whitaker), mining frontiers (Mark Wyman), American Indians (Roger L. Nichols), and territorial government (Jo Tice Bloom) show that some subjects that have been around for two generations are still the beneficiaries of some excellent work in the last dozen years. Of course, these distinctions are a bit artificial. Aspects of social history and foreign affairs have been around for a generation; social history and frontier women and ethnic groups overlap (to cite only three examples). So the change in direction is part emphasis and part new definitions. Still, the results are sometimes impressive and always useful.

What the volume lacks is a concluding essay that summarizes the present state of these fields and offers an agenda for the future. The presence of the separate fields is exciting but also unsettling. Will the study of the American West become more determinedly regional? Will the field of the American frontier survive? Perhaps we will have to wait until 1993 to find out the definitive answers.

*Prehistoric Life on the Mississippi Floodplain: Stone Tool Use, Settlement Organization, and Subsistence Practices at the Labras Lake Site, Illinois*, by Richard W. Yerkes. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987. xiv, 279 pp. Figures, tables, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$25.00 cloth, \$10.00 paper.

REVIEWED BY ROBERT L. REEDER, UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-COLUMBIA

In this revision of his dissertation, Richard Yerkes examines prehistoric settlement and subsistence practices and chipped stone tool technology and use at the Labras Lake site in the American Bottom area of the Mississippi River valley. Excavated in the late 1970s as part of the FAI-270 archeological mitigation project, the site included Late Archaic, Late Woodland, and Mississippian components. Data from a microwear analysis of chipped stone artifacts using the Keeley high magnification approach, the study's main focus, are coupled with those from detailed geoarcheological, faunal, floral, feature, and distributional analyses.

Yerkes addresses a variety of topics. The impressive microwear study illustrates how functional interpretations from use-wear analyses can differ considerably from those derived from morphology-based approaches, underscoring the advantage of this kind of approach. Yerkes suggests that in spite of a dynamic environmental setting, similar plant and animal resources were available throughout

the site's different occupations; environmental changes were not a causal factor in this area's cultural development. Mississippian subsistence represented at Labras Lake was a broad spectrum strategy combining farming, hunting, and gathering—not specialized harvesting of a limited resource base. He concludes that economic and technological changes represented at the site through time were expansions of earlier bases, not replacements.

This volume is not without problems, however. Its most significant shortcoming is a recurring lack of explicit statement of definitions or criteria used in the analysis. For instance, discussions are inadequate or missing for key issues such as how individual components and assemblages were separated and identified at the site, the selection of the artifact sample used in the microwear analysis, and feature and site classifications. These lapses would be less noticeable if Yerkes were not so critical of apparently similar subjectivity by others. Also, he at times seems to forget his own recognition of use-wear limitations.

Overall, Yerkes's book is a significant contribution. Both the approach used and its conclusions should be of interest to a broad audience. It is based on a specific site and locality in the middle Mississippi valley, but cultural developments here either had parallels or ultimately affected developments elsewhere. Some of the study's conclusions challenge traditional interpretations and are pertinent for a much larger portion of the Midwest. Perhaps more important, Yerkes illustrates how modern cultural resource management projects can contribute substantially to our understanding of the archeological record. Analysis and study of the data from these projects need not stop with submission of a report to the funding agency.

*Indian Agriculture in America: Prehistory to the Present*, by R. Douglas Hurt. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1988. xiii, 290 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$29.95 cloth.

BY CYNTHIA R. KASEE, UNION INSTITUTE, GANTZ UNDERGRADUATE CENTER

*Indian Agriculture in America* is a chronological view of the development of agriculture in North America (with reference to its Mesoamerican origins). Hurt interweaves an account of the diffusion of the cultivation of staple aboriginal crops with discussions of the social and religious structures of countless tribes throughout all the major culture areas, culminating with a look at the decline of agriculture and the failure of federal policy and the reservation system either to maintain or to reintroduce farming in various native nations.

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